

Experimental Statistics: Preliminary estimates of Children Benefiting from an Effective Family-based Maintenance Arrangement Secured after Contact with Child Maintenance Options, GB - as of end of June 2015

Coverage: Great Britain

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Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions' strategic objective around child maintenance is to ensure the maximum number of children who live apart from one or both parents benefit from an effective maintenance arrangement through family-based arrangements or statutory means. Child Maintenance (CM) Options contributes towards this objective by providing free, impartial information and support to help separated parents make decisions on the child maintenance arrangement that best meets their needs. DWP monitors the child maintenance outcomes for separated parents who have telephone contact with CM Options.

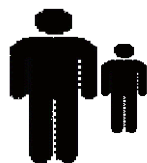
This is the first official release of this type of information produced quarterly. Annual results are also reported. These quarterly results are preliminary and will be revised in the publication of annual results for 2015/16.

Headline Outcomes as at the end of June 2015



9,500

effective family-based arrangements were made or changed after contact with CM Options.



14,600

children benefited from effective family-based arrangements made or changed after contact with CM Options.



13%

of customers made or changed an effective family-based arrangement after contact with CM Options.



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Background

The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) strategic objective around child maintenance is to ensure the maximum number of children who live apart from one or both parents benefit from an effective maintenance arrangement. These arrangements can be through the court system, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) or a Family-Based Arrangement (FBA).

FBA's referred to here are child maintenance arrangements which parents have agreed between themselves.

Where an effective FBA is referred to, for the purpose of this research it is defined as either:

- A regular financial arrangement where at least some of the agreed maintenance amount is always/usually received on time and the parent being surveyed considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well;
- or an ad hoc arrangement which includes a financial element (or transaction in kind, e.g. school uniform, and the parent being surveyed considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well.

CM Options has contributed towards this goal since it was created in July 2008. It was created to help separated parents choose the child maintenance arrangement that best suits them, for the benefit of their children, by providing information on the different ways they could accomplish this.

Now well-established, CM Options continues to provide this information, but encourages separated parents to choose an FBA where this is a viable and appropriate option.

The CM Options service is predominantly telephone based. Agents provide free, impartial information and support (including literature and various tools) covering arrangements through both statutory mechanisms and private means. They also provide information on how to deal with wider separation issues such as housing, work and money.

DWP monitors the child maintenance outcomes for separated parents who have telephone contact with CM Options. This is done through regular customer

telephone surveys. To help ensure customers receive the support they need to make their own decisions on child maintenance, CM Options do not have performance targets relating to the type of arrangements customers put in place. The main results from these surveys are outlined above on page 1.

The survey management, design and analyses are conducted by analysts in the DWP. The survey fieldwork is carried out by the CM Options supplier on behalf of the DWP.

Changes to Future Publications

As a result of changes to survey methodology these statistics are still undergoing a period of development and review. They are classified as experimental statistics and so they may be revised in future editions. Additional measures may be included in future publications when DWP analysts are assured of the quality of the data.

We welcome comments around this work from users and interested groups.

Upcoming Releases

The next release of Experimental Statistics will contain quarterly statistics on outcomes as at the end of September 2015. This will cover customers who have been in contact with CM Options during May to July 2015.

Effective FBAs after contact with CM Options

Main Findings

At the end of June 2015:

The percentage of customers who made/changed an effective FBA after contact with CM Options was 13%.

A total of 9,500 effective family-based arrangements were made or changed after contact with the Child Maintenance Options service.

These arrangements have benefited 14,600 children.

It is important to note it is possible that parents would have made these arrangements regardless of their contact with CM Options.

See **Table 1 in the annex** for full data.

Other effective FBAs

Main Findings

Effective FBAs that are in place that were not secured as a result of contact with CM Options are termed “Other effective FBAs”.

At the end of June 2015, there were 6,800 “Other effective FBAs” in place, benefitting a total of 10,400 children.

Nine per cent of all customers had this arrangement.

Of this nine per cent over 90% were retained effective FBAs. Retained effective FBAs are effective FBAs that were made before contact with CM Options and which have not changed since contact.

The remainder consists of a small number of arrangements made by people who could not remember if their family-based arrangement was set up before or after contact with CM Options.

See **Table 2 in the annex** for full data.

All arrangement outcomes

Arrangement type	Quarter 1 flow (at the end of June 2015) ¹	%
Any effective FBA	16,300	22
<i>Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options</i>	9,500	13
<i>Other Effective FBAs²</i>	6,800	9
CSA/ CMS arrangements	29,900	40
Court arrangements	600	1
No child maintenance interest/reconciled	100	0
Non-effective FBAs	4,000	5
No arrangement	23,200	31
Total	74,100	100

1 Some numbers may not add up due to rounding.

2 Over 90% of the effective FBAs in the 'Other Effective FBAs' category are retained effective FBAs. Retained effective FBAs are effective FBAs that were made before contact with CM Options and which have not changed since contact.

It is possible for parents to have more than one type of arrangement. This can occur where a parent has more than one child that qualifies for child maintenance and different arrangements are made for different children. This creates a risk of double counting the same parent.

In order to overcome the problem of double counting we have used a hierarchy principle which reflects the various arrangement types in the Child Maintenance reform programme.

A parent's primary arrangement covers their youngest child. However, if they have more than one arrangement, their secondary arrangement is the one that covers the most children. If equal numbers of children are covered by different arrangements, then the one with the second youngest child is categorised as their secondary arrangement.

The 2012 CMS scheme is designed to make parents pause and think about their options before applying to use the statutory service, which is intended to help those who cannot make a FBA. Some parents may choose to make their own arrangement through the courts. There are situations where no arrangements are agreed by the parents.

A customer is considered to have an effective FBA if either the primary or secondary arrangement is an effective FBA. A CSA/CMS arrangement is considered to be in place if either the primary or secondary arrangement is a CSA/CMS arrangement and neither is an effective FBA. A court arrangement is considered to be in place if either the primary or secondary arrangement is a court arrangement and neither is an effective FBA or a CSA/CMS arrangement.

It is expected that the proportion of effective FBAs made or changed after contact with CM Options will increase as a result of the Reforms Programme. The proportion of CSA/CMS arrangements is expected to drop while that of no arrangements is expected to go up. It is not expected that the reforms will have a significant impact on the proportion of people choosing to make a court arrangement.

Methodology

Definitions

The main objective of this research is to measure:

The number of children benefiting from an effective FBA secured (made or changed) after parental contact with the CM Options service as at the end of June 2015.

There are effective FBAs in place that were not secured as a result of contact with CM Options. We call these "Other effective FBAs".

This includes parents who secured an effective FBA before contact with CM Options and those who cannot remember whether their arrangement was set up before or after contact with CM Options.

Survey Design

The data are produced through the quarterly surveys conducted by the CM Options supplier on behalf of DWP.

Our target population is composed of separated parents who have had a full telephone conversation with CM Options. A full telephone conversation is a conversation in which they have discussed all the child maintenance options available to them. These customers fall into two groups: inbound and outbound. Inbound calls are from customers to the service proactively seeking information and/ or support. Outbound calls are from CM Options to consenting customers referred on by Jobcentre Plus.

The sample is drawn to a stratified simple random sample design, where the strata are call type (inbound/outbound) and month of call (calendar month). An additional level of stratification - type of customer (case closure/ Business As Usual) - has recently been included. Case closure customers have a child maintenance arrangement with the CSA that is in the process of being closed due to the introduction of the new CMS. All other customers are Business As Usual customers. Unfortunately we could not produce separate statistics on case

closure and Business As Usual customers in this publication.

The sample size of case closure customers was not large enough to allow us to produce robust results. The results are weighted up to the population of telephony customers who had a full conversation with CM Options to ensure the results are representative.

There is a minimum of two months between the customer's first contact with CM Options and the time they are first contacted in the quarterly survey. This is to allow time for arrangements of any type to be set up.

Certain types of customers are excluded from the sampling frame for practical purposes, including non-English speakers and customers who opt out of being contacted for research purposes.

Results are weighted up to the telephony population of those who had a full conversation with CM Options and so will adjust for non-response, but not necessarily non-response bias.

Measuring the flow

Each quarter customers are surveyed to determine the actual outcome of their conversation with CM Options, i.e. whether an arrangement was made.

The flow for the first quarter of 2015/16 (with outcomes as at the end of June 2015) covers customers in contact with CM Options during February to April 2015.

The next annual results of outcomes will be reported to the end of March 2016 so that we have a robust annual view on the number of current effective FBAs that are in place after contact with CM Options and the resultant number of children benefiting.

Flow by arrangement type

The flow is estimated not only for effective FBAs but also for other arrangement types: CSA/CMS, court, no child maintenance interest/reconciled, non-effective FBAs and no arrangement.

Notes

Uses and Users

The main users of the statistics in this document include: the public, external interest groups, Parliament, Department for Work and Pensions Ministers, Ministers and officials in other Government departments, academics, the media and external commentators and Department for Work and Pensions policy and operational officials.

These Experimental Statistics are used by a number of internal stakeholders for:

- Monitoring and reporting performance trends against key indicators
- Informing briefing, lines to take and press releases
- Internal communications
- Answering Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information requests
- Undertaking internal analysis and producing more detailed figures
- Setting internal performance measures
- Policy evaluation and to help external users gauge the effectiveness of Child Maintenance Systems

Our external, internet based, publication means that we are unable to identify all of the ways this publication will be used externally. However, we do know the experimental statistics are used for:

- Providing general information on the Child Maintenance Options Service in Great Britain
- Measuring performance of the Child Maintenance Options Service
- Informing discussions and meetings with external stakeholders and MPs
- Social research and academic studies of the effectiveness of social policy

Feedback Welcome

The Department for Work and Pensions is always glad to hear the comments and views of customers on these Experimental Statistics. Please email cm.analysis.research@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

Annex

Table 1 - Detailed Results: Effective FBAs made/changed after contact with CM Options and resulting number of children benefiting from these arrangements, as at the end of June 2015 (reported to the nearest hundred).

Quarter	Customers' month of first contact with CM Options	Population of telephony customers	Sample size	Effective FBAs after contact with CM Options			Resultant number of children benefiting			Percentage of customers with an effective FBA after contact with CM Options	Average number of children benefiting per effective FBA
				Total	CI Low	CI High	Total	CI Low	CI High		
June	Feb - Apr 15	74,076	636	9,500	6,900	12,100	14,600	10,200	19,000	13%	1.5

*Some numbers may not add up due to rounding.

**CI stands for confidence interval calculated at the 95% level. So for example, we can be 95% certain that the true number of effective family-based arrangements secured after contact with CM Options by the end of June 2015, lies between 6,900 and 12,100.

***Note customers in contact with the service were given a minimum of two months before they were surveyed to allow them time to form arrangements.

Table 2 - Detailed Results: Other effective FBAs (not secured after contact with CM Options) and resulting number of children benefiting from these arrangements, as at the end of June 2015 (reported to the nearest hundred).

Quarter	Customers' month of first contact with CM Options	Population of telephony customers	Sample size	Effective FBAs not secured as a result of contact with CM Options			Resultant number of children benefiting			Percentage of customers with an effective FBA not secured as a result of contact with CM Options	Average number of children benefiting per effective FBA
				Total	CI Low	CI High	Total	CI Low	CI High		
June	Feb - Apr 15	74,076	636	6,800	4,700	8,900	10,400	7,000	13,800	9%	1.5

*Some numbers may not add up due to rounding

**CI stands for confidence interval calculated at the 95% level. So for example, we can be 95% certain that the true number of other effective family-based arrangements (not secured as a result of contact with CM Options) by the end of June 2015, lies between 4,700 and 8,900.

***Note customers in contact with the service were given a minimum of two months before they were surveyed to allow them time to form arrangements.

Table 3: Population and Sample Totals.

Quarter	Month of customer contact	Population of telephony customers			Survey sample of customers		
		Inbound	Outbound	Total	Inbound responses	Outbound responses	Total responses
June	Feb-15	18,156	5,062	23,218	129	56	185
	Mar-15	20,320	6,633	26,953	158	61	219
	Apr-15	18,538	5,367	23,905	158	74	232
	Total	57,014	17,062	74,076	445	191	636